

# D o s s i e r   E d i t o r i a l

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## Re-thinking architectural education

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In the 3rd issue of A|Z ITU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture, we invited people to *rethink on architectural education*. The boundaries that define architecture have changed drastically throughout its history ranging from a building act to a discourse practice, and were expected to relate to shifts in the way architectural education is conceived and practiced. Yet, these changes did not seem to have any substantial impact on restructuring the knowledge given in architecture schools in terms of its epistemological basis. While both the profession and the ideational world of architecture are undergoing a significant change, the educational world of architecture has long been and still being dominated by specific paradigmatic schools, or their variations, or some hybrid blurred copies and dismantled programmatic elements implemented into the curriculum derived from these traditions. A radical change has not appeared neither in the epistemological basis of architectural education, nor in the definition of the role of the architect when his/her education is concerned. Hence, although there are a number of innovative theoretical entrepreneurship within the design studio, in the first place, these did not have any reflections on the overall curriculum and secondly, they are still subject to be a part of the prevalent schools of thought, unless a change in epistemology is brought into light to be discussed. This is what we aimed to do in this issue;

*to provide a medium for new, even speculative, thoughts that question the epistemological basis of architectural education, and are potential endeavors for opening the way to new practices in architectural education.*

To do this, we had outlined some sub-topics under the main objective which is stated above, to guide the way to discussions. These were summarized as the following:

1. Evaluation of the past: Discussions on the *ontological and epistemological basis* of the prevalent schools of thought in the past as they relate to present practices within the design studio, and their possible percussions on the curriculum as a whole.
2. The Architect: Discussions on the *identity of the architect*, how this identity is shaped and transformed, and the role of schools of thought in architectural

design education and the architecture schools themselves in the formation of this identity (we are basically pointing out to the unchanging “star” syndrome).

3. New trends: Similar to the first one, this time the focus is not intended to be on an evaluation of the past as it relates to today's practice, but rather on today's practices to be discussed which denounce the past and propose *new ways of looking into architectural design education, by proposing a new ontological basis in defining either/or/both architecture and the architect.*

The above raised issues were intended to be discussed in terms of, i) pedagogic methods and tools and strategic/tactic approaches to architectural design education, ii) universal rules and particular experiences in architectural design education, iii) cultural discourse (society, gender, identity or sub-culture issues) and ethical concerns as they are introduced to the studio, iv) design disciplines; relations with other professions and disciplines (history, philosophy, humanities, etc.), v) curriculum as a whole, continuity and change in relation to architectural education, vi) theory, discourse and praxis relations in architectural education, and vii) institutional histories and individual biographies were mostly welcomed.

By bringing up such an issue, we believe that it is just the right time to rethink on architectural design education, and unless this is done at the right time, with the prevailing conventions of architecture predominating the educational field, the profession will not be able to survive the pressurizing change emanating from both the daily life practices of architects and from theory making practices. While this was our intention, it became once more clear that academics are skeptical about questioning the conventions of their epistemological basis, although they may not intend to do this. Very few of the papers have attempted to look at the bigger picture or individual practices under the light of this bigger picture, rather than people's individual practices within the studio. Hence, we may want to bring up this issue once more in some future time. Now, let us proceed with discussing the works of people included in the dossier of this issue.

In this issue, in the dossier and theory sections including the papers of the two remarkable invited authors, we have nine valuable contributions. Quite a few of them are coming from other design disciplines like urban, industrial and graphic design, whereas others are directly related to Architectural Design Education and among which First Year Education gains a special attention. Doubtlessly, every contribution is worth to be introduced briefly here.

The invited paper “European Architectural Education in Motion” by Herman Neuckermans mainly deals with the issue of identity of schools in a changing European context imposing a unifying Ba-Ms system on higher education, which essentially is based on two cycles, undergraduate and graduate, promoting of mobility of students and staff. As many schools of architecture have already moved into the system, the question is raised whether this ‘unification’ means ‘equalization’. Therefore it is clearly underlined that ‘schools will have to strengthen their specificity to attract students from abroad who are interested in their colors’. Additionally, the paper points out to the variety of subjects and diplomas among the schools, and celebrates ‘the power of design ability’ and ‘designerly way of thinking’ to cope with this. But, it concludes by making a strong emphasis on the need for a redefinition of the minimum requirements for architect's education.

The other invited paper “Learning to Design in the Studio:2x2 Model” by Gabriela Goldschmidt contributes towards to the theory of design pedagogy by proposing a model for the design process in studio education, believing that personal input of

the designer plays an important role in the process. However, the author makes a special emphasis on studio instruction and its contribution to the learning of 'designerly ways of knowing'. Appreciating the 'double layered' characteristics of design and teaching, she develops a double layered model of learning as conceptual and professional, situated in the model together with both the designer's input and instructional input. It is pointed out that learning occurs in relation to the perception-conception relationships, which in the case of designing is mediated through representation. To exemplify, two representation-wise studio exercises are introduced. The paper concludes by strongly highlighting the importance of studio instruction and the need for pre-training of studio instructors based on a design pedagogy theory, the absence of which is sorely lacking today.

Nezih Ayıran's article, "From Systematic Methods to the Metaphorical Approach in Design Studio", re-visits the extremely crucial debate between explaining design in terms of scientific processes and mental processes, which has initially appeared in design research area for about three decades; subsequently, this debate affected researches and studies conducted on design teaching and caused dramatic changes in this area. Although the change seemed acceptable and was not resisted, its theoretical background however needs to be re-considered occasionally and new contributions from other popular fields like philosophy were necessary and inevitable. The paper successfully reviews the debate from this point of view at first, and later goes further on to present a student oriented instruction approach by highlighting the role of metaphors especially; as they are expected not only to help the students visualize and think of their design proposals, but also help the instructors understand the student's perception of the world as well as given design issues.

"A Paradigm Shift in the First Year Design Education" by Fatma Erkök, Çiğdem Demirel Eren, Funda Uz Sönmez, and Semra Aydınlı introduce a change in design education which is characterized by its unified mind and holistic approach, and is considered as a paradigm shift. The authors regard the existence of ambiguous variables due to both change and continuity in design education as a new paradigm. As Kuhn points out, there is no expert knowledge and there are no rules; instead there are many nodes, each of which connects to several other nodes forming ambiguous, complicated network relations. Due to this approach, Architectural Design, Basic Design and Technical Drawing courses were integrated within one studio, which is also introduced as an intellectual studio atmosphere organized to develop a more unified mind for beginners of Architectural Education. The dialectic nature of design has been strongly underlined and widely used to explain the characteristics of an intellectual studio atmosphere, such as teaching/learning, product/process, learning objectively/experiencing subjectively, generality/particularity and abstraction/concreteness, etc. It is further emphasized that all these explain the richness of design activity and give rise to ambiguity and flexibility in design thinking and to vague conditions of the design studio, within which contemporary, institutionally based design education medium is intended to be nourished by seeking 'how' to teach and learn design rather than 'what' to teach and learn.

The article "To Begin" by Guita Farifarsadri introduces the approach of gradually transforming Basic Design course into an introductory design course, within the first year architectural education curriculum. The paper reviews the Basic Design Methodology developed in Bauhaus School, as trying to free students from all their preconceptions and letting them return to a child-like state and creating a new common concrete language about formal organizations which goes hand in hand to keep the modernist form production attitude alive in any field of design profession

as well as education. Furthermore, the paper underlines that architectural design is a social activity and there are many extrinsic factors which affect the decisions of a designer, more than the abstract formal values. Additionally, it is suggested that the human aspects of formal values in architectural production need special attention at the beginning stage of design education. Taking the multicultural background of students of the Eastern Mediterranean University into account, the author demonstrates a holistic student-centered approach for breaking the boundaries of the Bauhausian methods of Basic Design.

“Information and Communication Technologies in Design Studio” by Arzu Erdem and Burak Pak underlines the argument on computing being a part of the working environment in which both education and practice exist; it also widely deals with the idea that the context of design education needs to be interpreted in the context of this medium. The approach adopted through the experiences gained from short term digital workshops integrated into the design studio curriculum, reveals that the deterministic notions of causality in conventional design studio teaching can be replaced with a non-linear, bottom-up systematic process which is expected to produce a prompt answer to the design question.

The article “An Assessment of Urban Designer Identity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” by Hatice Karabay Ayataç attempts to clarify the in-between identity of the urban designer which is apparently related to conceptual development of urban design as a professional discipline. Generally, urban design is referred as in relation to architecture and other parent disciplines; and urban designer was defined especially in terms of the architect or planner. However, it is revealed in the paper that urban design could be between architecture and planning professions, but also it is underlined that the urban designer should be someone more than an architect or a planner. Therefore a question arises, “how should the urban designer be trained and how such training might differ from that of the other related disciplines”. The paper discusses this question in length and concludes with stating that urban design training should be a specialized training available at postgraduate level. It is pointed out that the training program should be appropriate for those professional groups – architect, planner, landscape architect, engineer, social scientist, natural scientist – that can receive this training in terms of their background.

“Selling Modernity through Advertising” by Seval Dülgeroğlu Yavuz contextualizes the relationship between advertising and technology by categorizing different dimensions of this relation and by examining the parallels between their histories during the early 20th Century America. Looking at the subject from a different perspective, it is shown that objectives of advertising are changing from creating consumer culture to being a propaganda device. However, while in the former, it helps individuals to be widely accepted by the society and become a part of what is modern and popular, in the latter, it shapes the public opinion and behavior to be able to overcome the burdens of the times of social, political or cultural uncertainty and depression.

The paper, “Urban Spaces with Examples & the Classification of Urban Furniture” by Seçil Şatiroğlu and Elif Korkmaz, introduces urban furniture design as part of the strategies, policies and projects of urban design and planning. The authors make a special emphasis on urban furniture, which conforms to its environment in technical, esthetical and social means, and are vital tools for increasing the quality of urban space. Design of urban furniture which does not give harm to the existing or developing image of, especially historical, cities is stated as a crucial component of Urban Design & Urban Planning. Urban Furniture Design, being a part of Urban

Planning in macro terms, will also be valid for the formation and sustainability of Urban Design.

It was inspiring to have contributions from various fields of design here in this third issue AZ, and as we said in the preceding lines, we hope to raise the same debate once more in some future issue focusing more on the bigger picture, which would intend to question the epistemological basis of architectural education.